

[11] have a last look at the child's penis, as they will never see it again. Then the boy is proclaimed a man, and given clothes.

So far as could be observed, there is no circumcision of either the male or female, although such mutilations are indulged in by West African tribes in the region from which the Djakas came. The girls wear only the *cepe*, or a larger cloth known as *peugi*, until their first menstruation, when their mothers give them cloths. This is done in private. Menstruating women are required to leave their houses and retire

[12] to a separate hut situated outside the village on a by-path; they may not return until three days after the period is over. Under no condition are they allowed to go to the provision fields during this time.

[13] ready to be married. Sometimes they are betrothed in infancy, and occasionally a pregnant woman will betroth her child before it is born, conditionally, of course, upon its sex.

Once the child is betrothed the ceremony must take place, otherwise the disappointed prospective mate will call down a *jeze*, or curse, on the entire perjured family, and they will all die. The pubescent child does not look forward to marriage as time for leaving its family, nor is marriage an initiation into sex relations. For these two reasons, getting

[14] married is not a serious step, and there is little illegitimacy because there is no reason for objecting to a marriage.

[15] Youths must remain unmarried until their elders invite them to be wedded. It is customary for older people to receive much respectful attention, for the older people are the sources of tradition and authority.

/14 cont./

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The children learn their dances and games at a very early age and are always present at the festivals.

From earliest youth on they are taught to respect and venerate older persons, offenses against this obligatory respect are severely punished.

The boys in particular are taken along to the forest at an early age and remain now in connection with the processing of wood in other operation, as well as for hunting and fishing, and very quickly learn to swim.

Men, women, and children bathe separately in the river every day.

Chapter 12

Burial Customs and Other Ceremonies

769

They celebrate a burial custom with great solemnity. If one of them dies in Awa, that is, their land, then the corpse is cleaned, the ... is ... and it is placed in a coffin, in which various and especially ... The articles of clothing of the deceased are placed and together with all the ... also a new piece of cloth (usually black and purple) or cottonwood, a barrel which on which the coffin is placed. Hence they always take care to have a sufficient stock of new and unused cloths.

Ordinarily the corpse lies in the open coffin for one day before the internment takes place, in order to let it ferment. The relatives then sit around the coffin and weep considerably (177) in a mostly singing mood peculiar to them, in which the women also join from time to time.

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After the internment the closest blood relatives proceed to hold the days of mourning on a mat spread out on the ground for eight days. During this time they weep loudly by turns, at the same time making strange groans, while day and night, generally by female voices with many allusions, and always ending with a loud wailing, are said.

§126 cont. /

It is necessary to distinguish this principal guardianship, which is inseparable, from the secondary guardianship delegated by the uncles to the men or women charged with bringing up the child. §127 /

Designation of the guardian. When a child reaches five or six years, the mother and the uncles decide who will be charged with his education and will become his guardian. The thought of the Fulbe people is that a child is much better educated if he is insured and placed directly under the responsibility of an adult.

In order to decide who will bring up the child, they do not have a general meeting of the lineage. Everything is arranged among the mother and her brothers, people, the maternal grandmother, and the great-grandmother if she is still living. The child's classificatory uncles are consulted only if there are no uncles in the ordinary sense. Consultations have a preponderant influence in this decision as they do in all that concerns the child when he is young.

There is no precise rule for the devolution of the guardianship, and nobody can take advantage of a right over the child.

The guardian, male or female, carries out the responsibility of the education, but he can make no decision without asking the opinion of the uncles, whose decision is final. The guardianship can always be withdrawn.

The guardianship is exercised by one single person, man or woman.

It is very often the mother. In a large number of cases the mother raises her children, boys and girls, alone, with the cooperation of her husband, who often is not the father. Usually the husband has no right over them. Whether the children

7.11/

Recapitulation:

70% of the boys
80% of the girls are raised in the mother's lineage

20% of the boys
10% of the girls are raised in the father's lineage

10% of the boys
10% of the girls are raised by children in both lineages.

It is important, moreover, to emphasize in what proportion the children are brought up by women or men:

60% of the boys
80% of the girls are raised by women

40% of the boys
20% of the girls are raised by men.

This preponderant role of women in the education of the children is one of the fundamental aspects of the social structure of the Belugue Blacks. In fact, women consider that the children belong to them, and if they give some to men to bring up, it is only as many as they wish up. This conception which is found to be widespread among the Blacks of America, in the West Indies or in Guiana, explains, much more than the frequency of divorces, the impossibility for them to make up partnerships in the shadow of coexistence centered upon the women.

Several important points of information may still be drawn from these tables:

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Sometimes they build for a girl a little house when she comes close ... but she is hidden behind trees in the night.

At nightfall, when their mother is busy with the preparation of the meal, the girls are sent to get water or to angle for fish; there is warning in the surveillance, and no-one knows how to profit by it.

Until recent times girls were told by their mother in the house of a strict authority, and although engaged very young, they were not authorized to marry before reaching complete physical development.

It often used to happen that a girl might be promised by her mother to a man that was ten years older than she, although there is no longer promised, girl must be told, "to get her match on a girl," meaning by that to have received a portion of marriage). This girl always used to remain subject to the girl's father when she grew up and did not constitute a contract, usually spending, it did not involve any payment or compensation otherwise. A girl could not be obligated to a marriage which was absolutely disagreeable to her, but the mother's authority was great enough to make these marriages valid almost in most cases.

If a girl had not been promised, the young man who wanted to marry her used to try to attract her attention during a dance and to exchange a few words with her. 1.01.01.01 Later he could give her a public bearing symbol of betrothal and the representation of a house and a boat. If the girl accepted the match, he could propose to her officially.

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718 cont. /

2. Although it happens that people receive as a name an abba name, sometimes accompanied by a qualificative, such as Idikwaka.

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[754] Actually, each one knows his abba's name, which was revealed to him by his parents when he was a child; to this name is attached an abba line or fixed prohibition relative to the abba. Both are carefully kept secret even from near relatives and friends, for knowing them could help the wicked take possession of the abba. On this subject people often use the term gudu line, so they say ni gudu instead of ni abba. This term is easily confused with the prohibition imposed on the possessed person by the god which incarnates itself in him; these are two very different matters.

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[711] The abba line is unique for each man. It is taught by the parents when the child is completely weaned. They try to draw parallels between the food he has eaten and the health disorders he may exhibit, and these suggestions are confirmed by the abba's line.

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752 A man does not ordinarily pray to his abba. He addresses prayer to it only if he is sick, to ask it for protection, or before leaving on a long trip, to ask it to watch over him. If he comes back safe and sound, he thanks it by making an offering to it, in the form of a bottle of nyap (cast oil), which he then squirts down over his head.

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754 According to Mr. W. F. van Lier, the Dinka have the idea that the shadow (hantu) is the visible image of the abba; the hantu is not supposed to have this conception; one does not believe that they attach any importance whatever to whether a man's shadow passes over them; on the contrary, one must not step over a man lying on the ground, then might injure his abba.